

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** APRIL 15, 2015

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**THROUGH:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER *m*

**FROM:** MORGAN ROUTH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET *MR*

**SUBJECT:** BUDGET MEMO #20: RESPONSE TO COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ON THE BUDGET WEBSITE

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The Office of Management and Budget page on the City's website in a comment board to allow visitors to the site to post comments and questions. This memorandum is inform City Council of the comments/questions received and staff's response to them. To date, three comments/questions have been received.

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**Comment:** For the third year in a row property taxes are set to increase. Will there be a noticeable difference in the services supplied? Steady increases lessen the affordability of Alexandria City for my family.

**Response:** Although the property tax rate is not proposed to increase in the FY 2016 budget, many residential taxpayers will experience an increase in their tax bill of between 3% and 4% due to increases in the value of their property. This is the prime reason why the City Manager did not propose an increase in the tax rate. A portion of the increases will be used to maintain the current level of service provided by the City due to increasing costs, but a portion will also be used to fund expanded services. A complete list of the service adjustments included in the FY 2016 budget can be found in Budget Memo #3 posted on the budget website.

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**Comment:** Please consider full funding of the ACPS budget. Enrollment is expected to reach 14,745 students, which is an increase of 3.7 percent over the current school year. By 2020, ACPS is projected to have 16,449 students. ACPS facilities are past their prime and need to be updated.

**Response:** Thank you for sharing your recommendations with the Office of Management and Budget regarding funding for the ACPS budget. Your response is much appreciated and will be taken into consideration as we move forward in the FY 2016 budget process.

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Comment: Why is the city creating a new General Dentistry program for \$209k (on page 9.18 of budget)? Why is the Affordable Housing Program increasing by 41.5% over last year (\$9.17M) on page 13.28? Why is the home ownership program increasing by 106.6% on page 13.28?

It should be fairly simple to pare down down these programs and it should take away any threat of a tax increase.

Response: Based on the statistics cited in this comment, it appears to be in response to the FY 2015 approved budget rather than the FY 2016 proposed budget. In FY 2016, Affordable Housing Development & Preservation proposed budgeted expenditures are \$7.4M, a decrease of 19.5% compared to FY 2015. This is mainly due to the use of carryover funding from the Housing Trust Fund for an affordable housing project in FY 2015 (as detailed on page 14.36 of the budget book). Home ownership proposed budgeted expenditures are \$458K, a decrease of 17.3% over FY 2015 levels. The creation of the General Dentistry reflected the FY 2015 transfer of the dental services program from the Health Department to an outside service provider.